

BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM

Country Reports on Terrorism 2013

Report

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SRI LANKA

Overview: The Sri Lankan government defeated the terrorist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009. Concerns remain that widely reported allegations of atrocities and violations of international law committed by both the government and the LTTE during the civil war have not been addressed. Partly as a result, counterterrorism cooperation and training with the United States was limited in 2013. No arrests related to terrorism were made, but the Government of Sri Lanka remained concerned that the LTTE's international network of financial support was still functioning. The Sri Lankan government continued to maintain a strong military presence in post-conflict areas and continued to voice concern about the possible re-emergence of pro-LTTE sympathizers. Sri Lankan police did not participate in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program in 2013.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Counterterrorism legislation in Sri Lanka has historically focused on eliminating the LTTE. In 2013, the Government of Sri Lanka continued to implement the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), enacted in 1982 as a wartime measure, which gives security forces sweeping powers to search, arrest, and detain individuals. The government sometimes used the PTA to stifle dissent among political opponents or others critical of the government.

Although U.S. antiterrorism assistance to Sri Lanka has generally been limited, in 2013 the Sri Lankan government was a proactive partner with the U.S. Departments of State, Homeland Security, Defense, and Energy on securing its maritime border. The U.S. Coast Guard, under the Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security program, continued to train Sri Lankan Coast Guard and Navy personnel on border and export control matters, and the government of Sri Lanka continued to cooperate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection through the Container Security Initiative.

Border security remained a significant issue for the Sri Lankan Government in 2013. In 2013, the U.S. State Department trained 25 Sri Lankan immigration officials on fraudulent document recognition, while the International Organization for Migration (IOM) trained 40 immigration officers in techniques to improve border surveillance and combat human trafficking. IOM also continued to work with the Australian government to provide specialized training to Sri Lankan immigration personnel on profiling, identification of violators, and arrests and prosecutions, among other border control-related training.

Beginning in late 2012, the Sri Lankan government began partnering with the Canadian Counterterrorism Program on two border security related projects: the Interpol Database system,

used to store and share profiling information in real time, and the Lost and Stolen Passport program, which addresses the large-scale border control issues the Sri Lankan government faces.

Also in 2013, the Sri Lankan government collaborated with the EU Immigration Department on the Advanced Passenger Information system, which transmits passenger information to Government of Sri Lanka immigration officials upon arrival. Collaboration with the Australian government has resulted in the development of a passport fingerprinting program scheduled to go online in 2014. The data generated from these collection systems will be significant assets to the Sri Lankan government in its efforts to control and combat illegal migration; however, the issue of maritime border security is one that needs additional action and must be considered within a regional context.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Sri Lanka belongs to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and the Finance of Terrorism (EAG), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. In June, the FATF welcomed Sri Lanka's progress in improving its anti-money laundering/counterterrorist finance (AML/CFT) regime and removed the country from FATF's monitoring process. Sri Lanka was, however, encouraged to continue the implementation of its procedures to identify and freeze terrorist assets.

While neither an important regional financial center nor a preferred center for money laundering, several factors make the country vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist finance. These include a lack of transparent tender mechanisms in government projects, past experience with terrorism, tax evasion, and a large informal economy. Legal remittance flows through the formal banking system have increased sharply in recent years. Remittances originate primarily from Sri Lanka's substantial overseas workforce.

Before its defeat in 2009, the LTTE had used a number of non-profit organizations for fundraising purposes. Sri Lanka continued its efforts to search for other financial links to the LTTE, even many years after the war ended. There were criticisms that this search for terrorists was extended well beyond its utility and expanded to target legitimate political opponents of the government. For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the 2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes:

<http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Regional and International Cooperation: In November, the Sri Lankan government held the Galle Dialogue, which featured multilateral discussion by international security force representatives on issues of regional security in South Asia. Issues covered during the conference included maritime terrorism and the trafficking of narcotics, weapons, and people.